

CE-73

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Rock United Presbyterian Church (preferred)

and or common Rock Church; The Rock

2. Location

street & number MD Route 273 at Rock Church Road n/a not for publication

city, town Fair Hill, Elkton ☒ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Cecil code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

1. Rock Presbyterian Church, Harold E. Diem, Pres. of Board of Directors
name The Rev. Allen B. Yuninger, Pastor

street & number 1. 6137 Telegraph Road
2. 3301 Eingerly Road

city, town Elkton ☒ vicinity of state Maryland 21921

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cecil County Courthouse

street & number East Main Street

city, town Elkton state Maryland 21921

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date 1983 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

CE 73

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Rock Presbyterian Church is a rectangular building of uncoursed rubble construction, three bays wide by three deep, with a steeply-pitched slate-clad gable roof, located in the northeastern corner of Cecil County, Maryland. The building was originally constructed in 1761; its present appearance, reflecting Victorian Gothic influence, is the result of renovations carried out in 1872 and 1900. The entrance is centered in the south gable facade and consists of double doors in an arched opening. One-over-one sash windows in arched openings occupy each of the flanking bays. A shed-roofed porch with square posts spans the facade. Above the entrance, a circular stained glass rose window was inserted in 1872 or 1900. In the peak of the gable, a shuttered lancet window is surmounted by a datestone reading "A Presbyterian Church 1761." The side elevations hold tall 7/6 lancet windows of colored and etched glass with Gothic tracery in the upper sash in each bay. A small rectangular addition holding a recessed pulpit was made to the north end of the church in 1900. On the interior, a vestibule leads into the sanctuary, which has a raised gallery at the rear. The interior features rich Gothic detailing, including elaborately carved walnut trusswork, a walnut arch defining the pulpit recess, and a gallery rail with a lancet-arch motif; these elements date from the 1900 renovation, as do the pressed-metal ceiling and chestnut wainscoting. The pews of grained ash with walnut trim were installed in 1872. West of the church is a stone Session House; this 1½ story, gable-roofed building was originally constructed in 1762. It stands three bays wide by one bay deep, with a gabled stone vestibule projecting from the right-hand bay of its principal facade. The building retains considerable integrity despite a small frame addition to one end and the sheathing of the upper half-story in fishscale shingles. Also on the property is a modern white stucco Church House constructed in 1953, which does not contribute to the significance of the resource.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Rock Presbyterian Church as it stands today is a gothic stone building approximately 60 feet by 40 feet having three bays on each side, each of which contains a large arched window. The front is also a three bay facade. The church has a very steeply pitched slate roof which has under its peak on the front, a date stone reading "A Presbyterian Church 1761." Under the date stone is an arched window with shutters. Below the window and just above the porch roof is a circular stained glass (rose) window. The porch roof covers double entrance doors flanked by a window on each side.

At the rear of the building is a rectangular addition which houses the pulpit. The addition has a small arched window on each side and two small rectangular windows in the basement at the rear. Along the west side of the addition are large exterior basement doors.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Rock United Presbyterian Church

Continuation sheet Cecil County

Item number

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Page

1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The Session House built in 1762 is also of stone with a modern frame addition. The original part is 19 feet 6 inches by 29 feet 6 inches with an entrance hall of 6 feet by 4 feet in addition. The south front is three bays and the east side two bays. The interior is one large room except for the entrance and new addition. It has plastered walls.

The frame addition is 2 stories and is 2 bays on each side and was added on to the west side of the stone building. It is 13 feet by 19 feet 4 inches and has a bathroom and small stair case to the one room second floor. It is used for a kitchen.

Also on the grounds is a modern white stucco Church House. It was built in 1953 and is 80 feet long and 32 feet wide. It has two stories and is seven bays long and 4 bays wide. The front porch is 9 feet by 8 feet. Upstairs is a kitchen and dining room while Sunday School rooms, etc., are downstairs. This building is used for Sunday School, church suppers and other events.

While Rock Church and the Session House, the two historic buildings on the site, were built in 1761 and 1762 respectively they have been renovated from time to time. Even though they have been changed from the original Colonial arrangement to simple Gothic with some Victorian features, these renovations have achieved significance in their own right. The site also contains a huge oak tree and outcroppings of Port Deposit gneiss from which the church gets its name, Rock.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1761; 1872; 1900

Builder Architect Builder - Walker & Gibson
1900 architect - W. L. Plack

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Applicable Criteria: A, C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Rock Presbyterian Church is significant for its association with early Scotch-Irish immigration into northeastern Maryland, and with the concomitant growth of the Presbyterian religion in the region. The congregation it serves was organized in 1720, and utilized first a log structure, and later a frame building to hold their services. The present stone building, the third to serve the congregation, was constructed in 1761 and reflects the efforts of a mature, established community. The church derives additional significance from its architecture; in continuous use since its construction, the building has undergone a series of renovations in response to the changing needs and tastes of the congregation. Throughout these renovations, its basic form has been preserved, so that it is still able to evoke a sense of its historic association with early Presbyterianism, while reflecting the continuing vitality of an active congregation. In its present form, the church is unique in northern Cecil County in presenting an example of a carefully conceived and successfully executed Victorian Gothic remodeling of a mid-18th century vernacular church building. The Gothic detailing of the interior, including elaborately-carved walnut trusses and gallery rail, is especially noteworthy.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

On the east bank of Little Elk Creek in the northeast corner of Cecil County, Maryland, not far from the Pennsylvania and Delaware lines stands Rock Presbyterian Church and Rock Session House.

During the first quarter of the eighteenth century successive waves of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians immigrated to this area, taking up land and settling here. At this time there were few and widely scattered Presbyterian Churches, one being at New Castle, Delaware at Bohemia Manor, (extinct by 1740), and one at Head of Christiana, now in Delaware, founded against opposition from the New Castle Church, in 1707. Many of its members lived on the branches of Elk River some distance away. These people were influential in founding Rock Church.

About this time Presbyterianism enjoyed a tremendous growth and spread rapidly with the founding, from 1720 on, of many new churches such as Rock, one of the earliest and the mother church of New London Presbyterian Church, Penn., founded in 1726.

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Continuation sheet Rock United Presbyterian Church
Cecil County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 2

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Rock Church has been called by several names: Elk, Upper Elk, New Erection on the branches of the Elk River, and Elk River. On September 5, 1803 an act of the General Assembly gave it it's name and constitution.

Its first meeting house was of log and stood at what is now called Old Stone Graveyard, Lewisville, Pennsylvania. The second of clapboard and no longer standing, was built at the present Sharpes Cemetery after the church split in 1741, to the Old and the New sides.

The distinguished Reverend James Finley of the well known family of Presbyterian ministers and brother of the Reverend Samuel Finley who served as president of Princeton University, caused the congregations to reunite, at which time, 1761, the third and present building was built. This building was changed somewhat in 1844, then extensively in 1872 and in 1900 under the ministry of the Reverend William J. Fitz-Simmons it was renovated to bring it to it's present appearance. The architect was W. L. Plack of Philadelphia and the builders were Walker and Gibson.

Elk River or Rock Church was first served by supply ministers but in October of 1724 the Reverend Joseph Houston accepted the call as its first minister. Later under the ministry of the Reverend J. R. Milligan, the short-lived, 1889-1905, Rock Academy was founded.

Some revolutionary war figures who served as elders were: Amos Alexander, William Mackey, Col. Samuel Maffit and Dr. Abraham D. Mitchell. The Reverends James Latta, James Dunlap and Joseph Alexander, well known ministers, were sons of Rock Church families.

Rock Session House was built in 1762. It, too, has undergone several renovations to bring it to its present looks. Built as a meeting room for the session, it has also been used by the Reverend Alexander McDowell and other ministers as a school house even before Rock Academy used it for that purpose. Presently it is used for session meetings, a choir robing room and for various small social functions.

Also on the site is the Church House a modern, built in 1953, stucco building used as a Sunday School and for church suppers and other such functions.

9. Major Bibliographical References

A Brief History of Rock United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Incorporating the 1872 "History" by Rev. John Henry Johns by Rev. Allen B. Yuniger

Land Records

Historical Society files

Other church histories

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Approximately 3 acres

Quadrangle name Bay View, Maryland & Pennsylvania

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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 Zone Easting Northing

B

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Harold (Anne) Copley

Cecil County Committee

organization Maryland Historical Trust

date June 21, 1983

street & number 912 Appleton Road

telephone 301-398-3816

city or town Elkton

state Maryland 21921

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

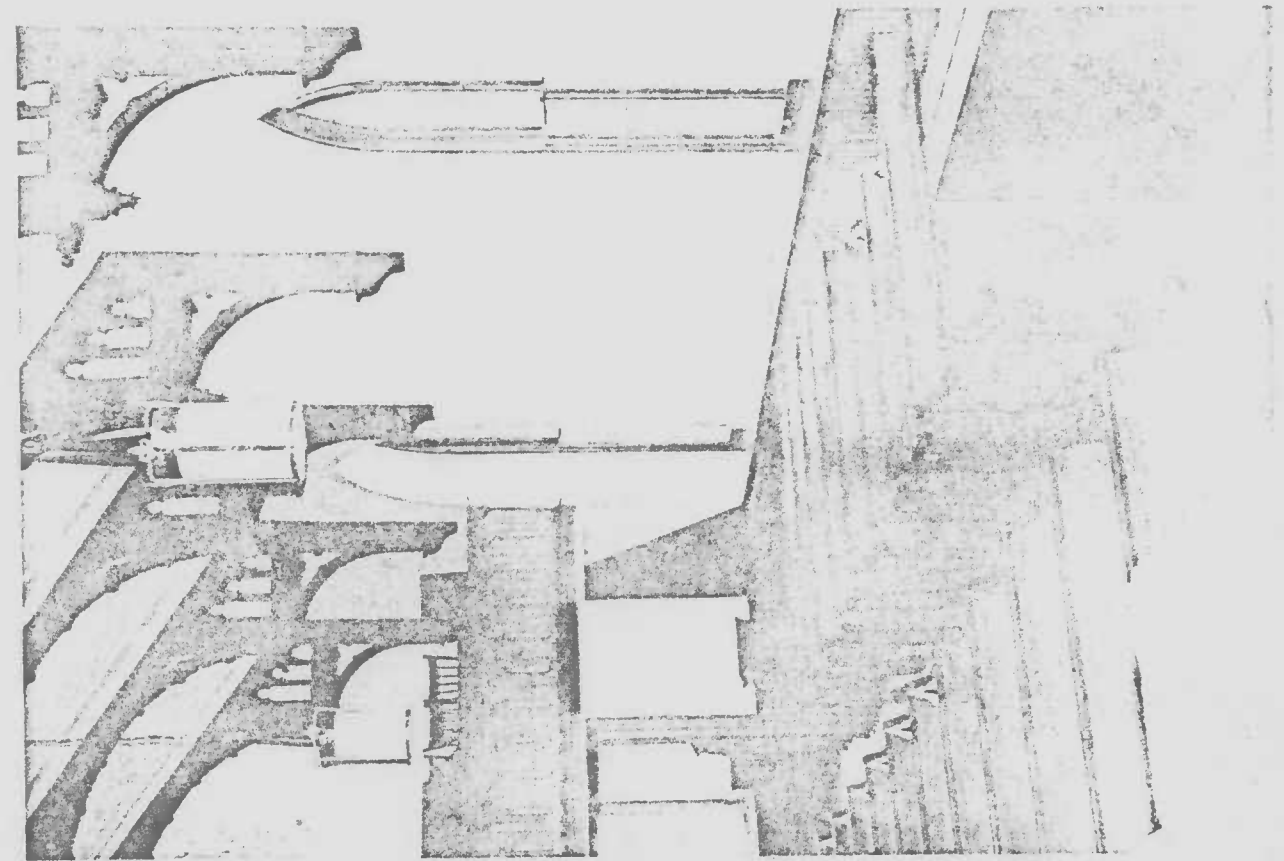
Attest:

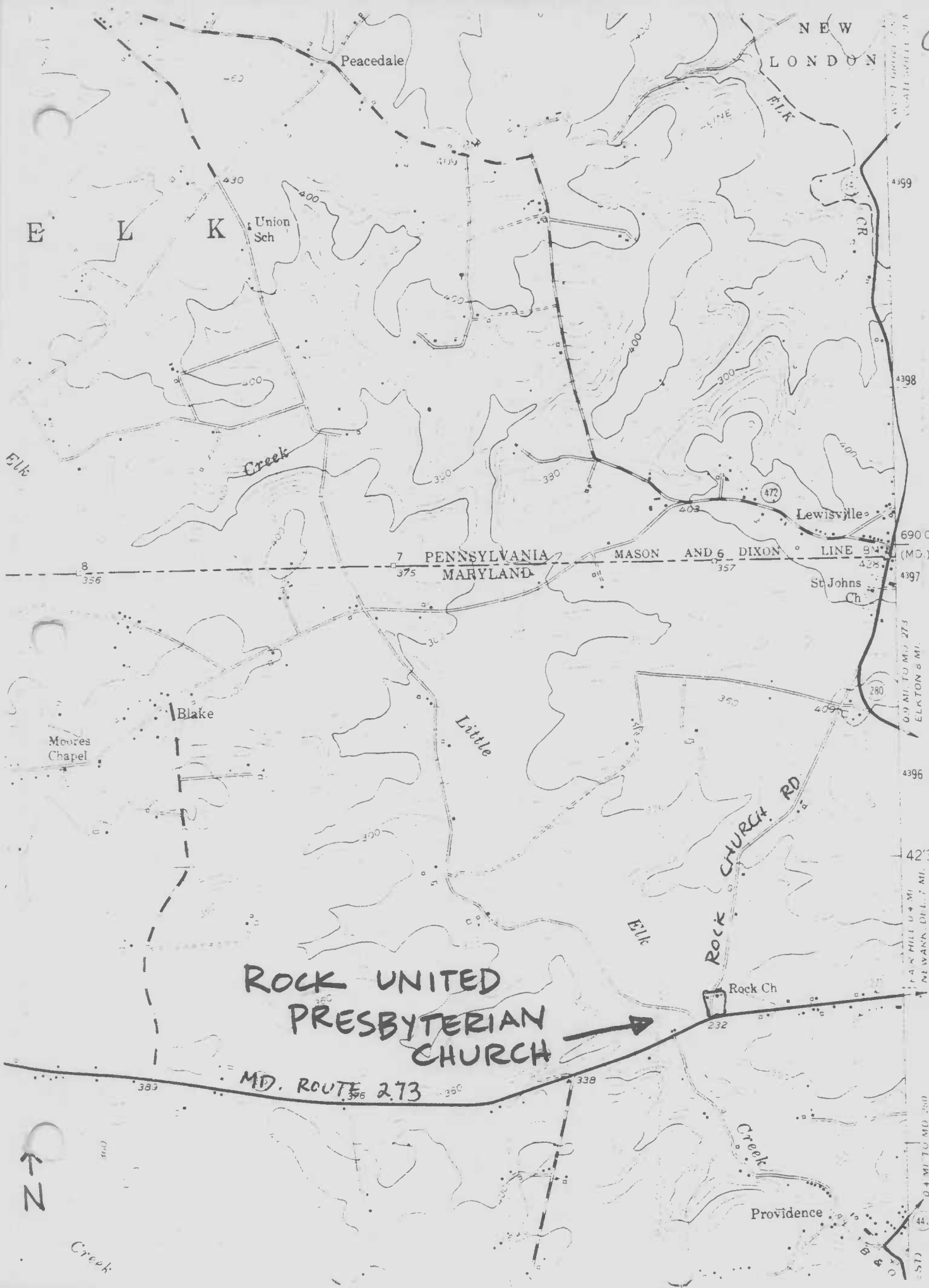
date

Chief of Registration



CE-73





CE-73

scale 1:24000

ROCK UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

MD. ROUTE 273

BAY VIEW QUADRANGLE

U.S. Dept. of Interior
Geological Survey
Md.-Penn.
7.5 Minute Series (Topographic)

0.4 MI TO MD 200
0.4 MI TO MD 273
0.9 MI TO MD 273
ELKTON 6 MI

0800733200

1. STATE **Maryland**
COUNTY **Cecil**
TOWN
STREET NO. **Rock Church**
VICINITY
ORIGINAL OWNER **Presbyterian Parish Church**
ORIGINAL USE
PRESENT OWNER **Rock Church**
PRESENT USE **Presbyterian Church**
WALL CONSTRUCTION **Finished Fieldstone**
NO. OF STORIES **1-1/2**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
INVENTORY

2. NAME **ROCK CHURCH**
DATE OR PERIOD **Late 18th century**
STYLE **Fieldstone**
ARCHITECT
BUILDER

3. FDR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE

4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION

OPEN TO PUBLIC

YES

This is a small fieldstone structure with a very steeply pitched A-roof. It is three bays wide and three bays deep with the gable end on the front. There is a one story porch across the front of the Church. There is much space between the windows on the sides on the Church and it is much deeper than it is wide. All the windows have pointed lancet arches and probably date from a Victorian remodeling of the structure. There is a rose window high in the front gable and which is probably contemporary with the construction of the Church since it is surrounded with a cut fieldstone frame. Above this rose window is a smaller arched window. The feeling of the Church is Victorian. All eighteenth century trim and decoration appears to have vanished. It is maintained in excellent condition and has a lovely setting next to a mountain brook.

Condition: Excellent

5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE

Endangered

Interior

Exterior



6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)

8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages)
INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.

7. PHOTOGRAPH

9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER

Paul Alan Brinkman
19 December 1967

DATE OF RECORD

NCB

+1/2

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTO APHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE

Rock Church was erected in 1761. It was built of stone and the present dimensions are the same as the original with the exception of a stone addition. The church had three doors one in each end about 10 feet from the east side and one midway in the west side. Between the end doors was a wide aisle, running the entire length of the church, in which there were the long benches and tables used at communion service. Above the middle of the east side stood the massive elaborately carved blue pulpit, high against the wall, with an immense sounding board projecting overhead along the ceiling. A rounded stairway of ten or twelve steps ran up the pulpit, in front, was a boxed up space for the choir, which in those days consisted of one man. From the pulpit to the door, in the west side was a medium sized aisle, and some eight or ten feet from each end of the church, and running from the long aisle towards the west side were two narrow aisles. The pews rose in amphitheatre style as they approached the walls. The back pews along the two ends, also those along the west side were high boxes, with small blue balustrades in the front. The pews had doors and were without paint. The floor was made of plaster. The two large posts that supported the ceiling, as well as the doors, and the window frames were, like the pulpit painted blue.

In 1805 the building received a new roof of wooden shingles on just the east side. William Holland finished the roof by doing the west side in 1844. In either 1844 or 1872 the pulpit was moved from the east wall, the box pews were removed, and the doors in the west and north sides were removed. The south end was changed so that there were two doors replacing the one door, and the present porch was added. Also new pews of grained ash, with walnut trim, a walnut pulpit, three chandeliers, and stained glass windows were added. At this time a seventeen horseshed building existed.

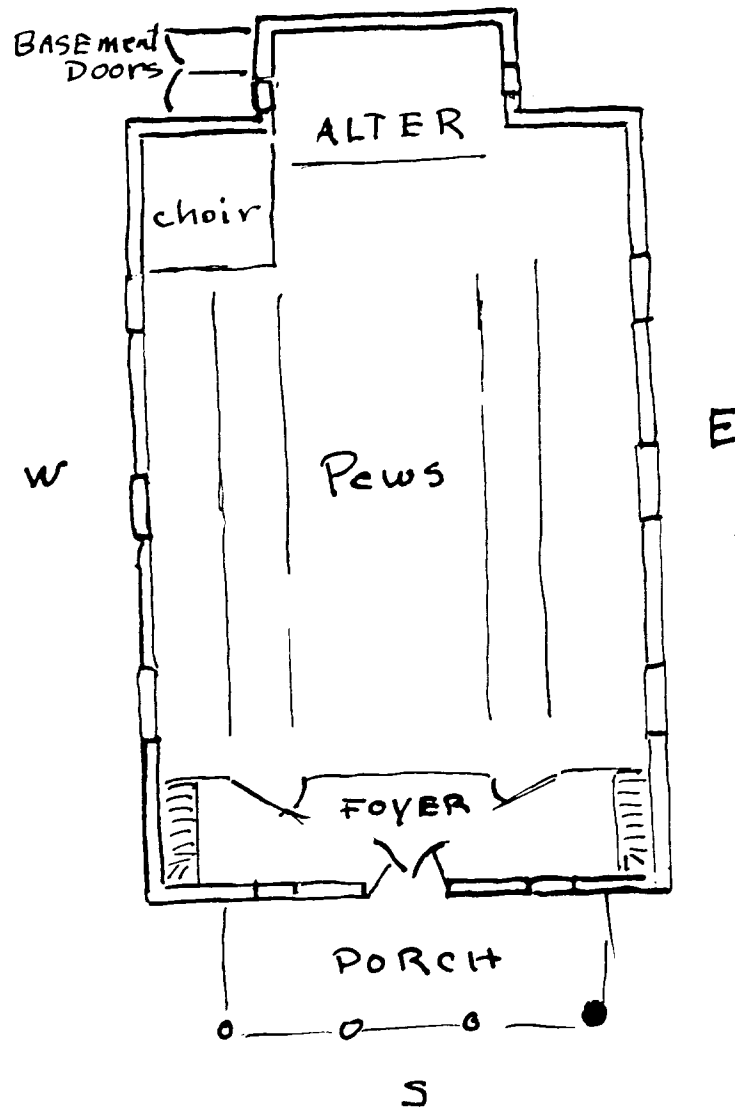
In 1889 the Session House which lies to the west of the church was rennovated to house an academy. By 1900 more work was in order for the church. The interior walls were studded, lathed, and plastered. A recess pulpit was built which required a 8' by 19' stone addition(the only addition to the church). A steel ceiling was added along with eight chestnut tresses with heavy wall brackets. The church was painted inside and out, the pews were refinished, red carpet was laid on the sanctuary floor, and the auditorium wainscotted in chestnut. New pulpit chairs and a communion table were also obtained. The work was done by Walker and Gibson.

Between 1902-6 the arch over the pulpit was added and between 1907-14 the choir enclosure was built. Steam heat was installed in 1914 by David Stoll. In 1953 a community center was built on a knoll just above the church. A year later the Session House was restored.

In 1970 a new sub flooring, red wall to wall carpeting, wiring, and Gothic style lighting were added. The pews were also refinished in this year.

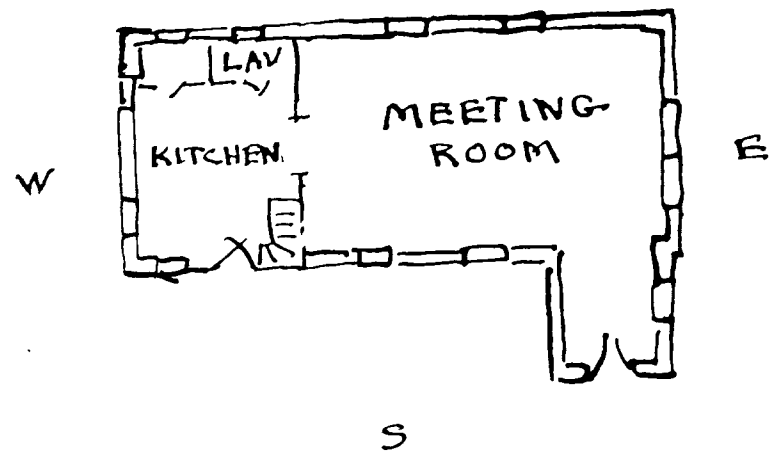
↑ Add The two doors at the south end were replaced by windows and the present double doors in the center of the south side were installed. The porch received a slate roof and a cement floor, walk, and steps to the road.

ROCK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH N Cecil County



Not to scale

ROCK SESSION HOUSE Cecil County N



Not to scale

6/20/83



Rock Church and Session House



Rock Church and Session House
North



Rec. Presby. C. W. 2-43

(13)





1970's

CE-73

Rock Presbyterian Church

Stirling



Session House
CE-73

97

Little Elk Creek H.D.



Rock Presbyterian Church

CE-73

VIEW OF CHURCH AND Sesson House

EAST ELEVATION

NEAR

FAR Hill, MD.

CECIL

1/80

PBT

NEG. MHT

4



CE - 73

Rock Church,
near Fair Hill

Paul Touart 3/80

Negatives at MIT



Rock Church

CE-73



Rock Church

CE-73



CECIL CTY # 73

(73) Cecil

404 DAG 1/68



Cecil City # 73

CE 73

(73) Cent

Rock Church

404 DAG 1/68



C&C 14 CTY #73

(73) Con

CE. 73

Rock Church

404 DAG 1/68



Rox Church

CE-73

